

REMARKS

Summary of Office Action

Claims 1-6, 8, 10-15, 17-20 and 35-40 are pending in this application.

Claims 1-6, 8, 10-14, 17-18 and 35-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Logan et al. PCT publication No. WO 00/15259 ("Logan").

Claims 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan in view of Scholz et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,273,912 ("Scholz").

Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to more particularly define the claimed invention. Applicants' claim amendments introduce no new matter and are fully supported by the originally filed specification, for example at paragraph [0094].

Reply to the 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 Rejections

Claims 1-4, 6, 8, 10-14, 17-18 and 35-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Logan. Claims 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan in view of Scholz.

Although Logan was identified as PCT US00/15259, this PCT application does not appear to be the one on which the Examiner is relying. Instead, applicants will assume that the Examiner intended on identifying Logan et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,699,256, which is identified in the Notice of References Cited provided with the Office Action.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a connector assembly that includes a body and an outside-retention element coupled to the distal portion of the body. The distal portion of the body includes a hinge joint, and the outside-retention element is hingedly coupled to the body "by the interaction of hinge eyelets of the outside-retention element with the hinge joint" (claim 1, emphasis added).

The Examiner contends that Logan shows all of the features of applicants' claimed connector, and in particular points to the outwardly extending barb portions of retention element 202 as being hingedly coupled to the body because they are made of nitinol (Office Action, p. 3).

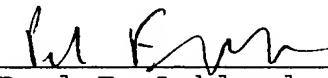
Applicants respectfully submit that neither Logan nor Scholz, whether taken alone or in combination, show or suggest applicants' claimed feature of a connector assembly that includes a body with a hinge joint and an outside-retention element with hinge eyelets configured to interact with the hinge joint to couple the body to the outside-retention element, as recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over Logan and Scholz, whether taken alone or in combination.

Claims 2-4, 6-8, 10-14, 17-18 and 35-40 depend from claim 1. Accordingly, claims 2-4, 6-8, 10-14, 17-18 and 35-40 are patentable over Logan and Scholz, whether taken alone or in combination, for at least the reasons that claim 1 is patentable. Therefore, applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 1-4, 6, 8, 10-14, 17-20 and 35-40 be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, claims 1-6, 8, 10-15, 17-20 and 35-40 are in condition for allowance. This application is therefore in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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